

Members

Sen. Thomas Wyss, Chairperson  
Sen. Allen Paul  
Sen. Allie Craycraft  
Sen. Timothy Skinner  
Rep. Rich McClain  
Rep. Matt Whetstone  
Rep. Ben GiaQuinta  
Rep. Scott Reske  
John Dahman  
Ken Hodges  
Joe Ryan  
Lloyd Arnold



## COMMISSION ON MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

*Legislative Services Agency*  
200 West Washington Street, Suite 301  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789  
Tel: (317) 233-0696 Fax: (317) 232-2554

LSA Staff:

Al Gossard, Fiscal Analyst for the Commission  
Dan Paliganoff, Attorney for the Commission

Authority: IC 2-5-20

### MEETING MINUTES<sup>1</sup>

Meeting Date: October 20, 2005  
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.  
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St.,  
Room 233  
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana  
Meeting Number: 1

**Members Present:** Sen. Thomas Wyss, Chairperson; Sen. Allie Craycraft; Rep. Matt Whetstone; Rep. Ben GiaQuinta; John Dahman; Ken Hodges; Joe Ryan; Lloyd Arnold.

**Members Absent:** Sen. Allen Paul; Sen. Timothy Skinner; Rep. Rich McClain; Rep. Scott Reske.

Sen. Thomas Wyss called the first meeting of the Commission on Military and Veterans Affairs to order at approximately 10:05 a.m. Members of the Commission were asked to introduce themselves.

#### *Update on Indiana National Guard Activities.*

Sen. Wyss recognized Major General R. Martin Umbarger, Adjutant General for Indiana, for a slide presentation on the activities of the Indiana National Guard (See Exhibit 1 for a copy of the slides). Major General Umbarger discussed the state and federal missions of the National Guard and provided information on the approximate 13,000 traditional soldiers and airmen and the various full-time personnel (approximately 943 active guard reserve, 1,520 federal uniformed employees, 405 state employees, and 39 contract employees). The annual payroll

---

<sup>1</sup> Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

of the Indiana National Guard exceeds \$175.5 million, which is all federal money. He added that about 96% of the Guard budget is federal, and there is nearly \$1 billion in infrastructure value.

Major General Umbarger provided information on Indiana locations of National Guard units, Joint Forces deployments since 9/11, Camp Atterbury's role in troop mobilization, various family support programs offered to troops, as well as Indiana's relationship to other states in terms of troop strength.

Major General Umbarger also provided details on Indiana's role in the disaster relief efforts following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Major General Umbarger introduced Brigadier General Omer Clifton Tooley, Joint Forces Deputy Commander for the Indiana Army National Guard, to provide additional details on Camp Atterbury and the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center (UTC), on the former grounds of the Muscatatuck State Developmental Center.

Brigadier General Tooley described the dual missions of the National Guard: (1) "Win the Peace" and (2) "Defend the Homeland." He also described the future challenges associated with these missions and the various forms those challenges may take. The future operating environment will likely be in an urban area since an estimated 75% of the population may reside in large urban areas by 2010. He also described the various tasks and training scenarios associated with each of the missions, especially as they relate to the two training facilities. He added that, where other training sites can train at the platoon level, these facilities can train at the battalion and brigade level.

The Muscatatuck Urban Training Center (UTC) was described as consisting of over 1,000 acres, including a 250-acre main campus and a 180-acre reservoir. The facility includes 68 buildings with 851,000 square feet under roof and 9 miles of roads. The former grounds of the Muscatatuck State Developmental Center was turned over by the state, with Purdue University receiving the northern and southern parts of the property and the National Guard receiving the middle part.

Major General Umbarger also described the relationship of the training facilities with the surrounding communities, as well as some of the research coming out of Purdue University.

Brigadier General Tooley also described the significant change in economic impact associated with Camp Atterbury. Before 9/11, the operating budget of Camp Atterbury was \$5.1 million with salaries of \$1.5 million. Currently, the operating budget has increased to \$21 million with salaries of \$22 million. He added that Camp Atterbury has been elevated to Tier 1 in terms of federal priority for future development and funding.

Major General Umbarger and Brigadier General Tooley also presented a short video on the Indiana National Guard. The video will be distributed to Commission members at a future date.

Several comments from Commission members involved the expression of appreciation to the Indiana National Guard, both for their service abroad and in their operations in support of disaster relief efforts in this country.

Sen. Wyss suggested that, next year, the Commission should conduct at least one of its meetings at the Muscatatuck UTC and Camp Atterbury so that members could see the facilities.

Major General Umbarger and Sen. Wyss introduced from the audience Mr. Eric Dietz, Executive Director of the Indiana Department of Homeland Security. Sen. Wyss indicated that this position is now a cabinet-level position in the administration. Sen. Wyss also requested that all members of the audience introduce themselves for the Commission members.

### *Discussion by Commission Members*

Colonel Joe Ryan, U.S. Army (Ret.), member of the Commission, provided a set of six items for consideration by the Commission.

[These items were initially sent to the Chairman, Sen. Wyss, in a letter, and Sen. Wyss requested that the letter be included in the public record. See Exhibit 2.]

Item #1 - Establishment of a Veterans Affairs Trust - Colonel Ryan stated that he would like to see Indiana establish a Veterans Affairs Trust, similar to the one established in Wisconsin. Colonel Ryan distributed two handouts: one describing the recommendation in detail and authored by Colonel Robert Book, USMC (Ret.), Chairman of the Military Veterans Coalition of Indiana, (See Exhibit 3) and an article describing the Wisconsin program (See Exhibit 4). According to the article, the Wisconsin Veterans Trust was established after World War II and institutionalizes an extensive program of veterans programs, benefits, and services, including education, emergency grants, small business loans, job training and retention, and loans. Colonel Ryan suggested that funding could consist of revenue from the sale of veterans license plates, a veterans trust check-off on state individual income tax return refunds (similar to the existing DNR check-off), individual and corporate contributions, investment income, or appropriations from the General Assembly.

There was discussion regarding fees associated with the Hoosier Veteran license plate. This license plate is part of the Indiana Special Recognition License Plate Program. As a special recognition plate, there is a \$15.00 administrative fee paid at the time of registration, which is in addition to any required group fee. However, there is currently no group fee for the Hoosier Veteran license plate.

Item #2 - Exempt Military Retirement Income from Indiana's Individual Income Tax - Colonel Ryan provided a handout to the Commission (See Exhibit 5) providing details and reasons for exempting military retirement income from the state income tax. He added that according to the U.S. Department of Defense, 22,245 Indiana military retirees received \$332.8 million in military retiree pay during FY 2004. This income is injected into the state's economy along with an estimated \$20 million in nontaxable U.S. Veterans Administration disability payments.

Item #3 - Award of High School Diplomas to Veterans of the Korean and Vietnam Wars - Colonel Ryan explained that many veterans left high school prior to graduating to join the military during the Korean and Vietnam wars. He added that those veterans with honorable discharges are deserving of a high school diploma.

Item #4 - Compensation for Indiana Medal of Honor Awardees for Certain Events - Colonel Ryan suggested that the state should provide compensation (e.g., travel, per diem, and lodging) for Indiana veterans who have received the Congressional Medal of Honor and who participate in patriotic and other official events. The state compensation would be for when the veteran is not otherwise compensated for attending the event. He added that this proposal should not have much fiscal impact, perhaps around \$200 per event or a few thousand dollars per year.

Item #5 - Renaming Part of the Indianapolis International Airport after H. Weir Cook

Colonel Ryan suggested that the Commission should draft a resolution urging the Indianapolis Airport Authority to name part of the Indianapolis International Airport complex in honor of H. Weir Cook, a Hoosier World War I and World War II pilot and aviation pioneer.

Item #6 - Increase the Death Benefit to \$150,000 - Colonel Ryan suggested that the death benefit to families of Indiana service members who are killed in the armed conflict in Iraq be increased to \$150,000. He added that there have been 51 or 52 Indiana deaths from the Iraqi conflict.

Some discussion by Commission members followed. However, no action was taken on these items.

John Dahman, member of the Commission, raised the issue that the USO at the Indianapolis International Airport is very short on space. He indicated that the USO provides services (e.g., food, TV use, etc.) to many service personnel while they are visitors to the airport. He stated that he would like to see the Indianapolis International Airport work with the USO in improving the situation.

Sen. Wyss suggested that this be a statement directed to the Mayor of Indianapolis and the Indianapolis Airport Authority and stated in the Commission's final report. Staff was requested to draft the statement for inclusion in the final report. This was properly moved and seconded and approved by consent of the members.

*Public Comments*

Donald Myers, USMC (Ret.), Indianapolis, stated his support of the High School Diploma issue raised by Colonel Ryan.

Rep. GiaQuinta, member of the Commission, stated that he had carried this legislation last year, but that it had been stopped in the Senate.

*Consideration of the Annual Report*

Sen. Wyss indicated that because this was going to be the only meeting of the Commission for this interim, the Commission needed to file an annual report. A draft of a report had been provided in the members' packets.

It was properly moved and seconded that the draft annual report, after being updated for today's meeting, be approved. With eight members present, the motion passed with a voice vote and with no members voting against.

Sen. Wyss thanked the members for their participation.

There being no further business to conduct, Sen. Wyss adjourned the meeting at about 12:15 p.m.